

Thursday, July 12, 2012

*Washington, D.C. – Congressman Ben Ray Luján of New Mexico’s Third District spoke on the House floor this morning in support of an amendment – which protects access to public lands – to H.R. 4402, the National Strategic and Critical Minerals Production Act,. Below are his remarks as prepared.*

“This amendment is straight forward. It’s about protecting hunting and fishing. That’s how simple it is. Sadly, a similar amendment was rejected by the Rules Committee when we had a similar debate over oil and gas leasing.

“I rise in strong support of the Grijalva amendment, and I urge my Republican colleagues to take a step back and consider the true impacts their policies are having on public lands. Public lands are just that – lands for the public to enjoy and use for the great benefits they provide. Generations of New Mexicans have used our state’s public lands for hunting, fishing, recreation and grazing. Mineral development is important, but let’s do it only where it makes sense.

“We have seen bill after bill on this floor that are giveaways to big oil companies, mining companies, and corporate interest that don’t consider the long-term detrimental impacts to wildlife habitat and public access for recreational use. Today’s bill would require the federal government to ‘to maximize the development’ of mining on public lands and threaten access to lands for hunting, fishing and recreational shooting. All the Grijalva amendment says is: let’s protect that area.

“This is a bad bill for hunters, anglers, and ranchers, and I urge support for the Grijalva Amendment to H.R 4402 to protect our access to our public lands.”

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